

Stoneyard

by inkedinserendipity

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Summary: The Chief of Berk is dead. His dragon remains.

Stoneyard

There is a strange dragon on the island of Berk.

This dragon was, according to legend, once pure-black and faster than sound's speed. Enemies shrieked its name in terror; it had the power to destroy villages, to fell the mightiest foes known to dragon or human.

According to this same legend, it was in its youth tamed by a boy.

Few living now can call up an image of the young, clumsy Hiccup Haddock Horrendous the Third. Fewer still remember the days before he was the great Dragon Trainer, Rider of Winds and Emissary to Dragonkin. But there is only one soul who can recall, in perfect detail, the shape of fifteen year old Hiccup's eyes and the imprint of his palm on warm, living scales.

The dragon called Toothless was the Dragon Elder of strange Berk. He was the Alpha of lands strange and dear. He was the leader of the flock of dragon-Hooligans, advisor to both dragon-kind and to understanding human. But, six years ago, Toothless retired from the status of Alpha, in a grand and momentous occasion that the witnesses will never forget. With a mighty Furious call, he bestowed upon a second Leviathan control of the dragons and urged her to use it benevolently, then galloped away, disappearing into the forest.

See, the villagers of Berk know that this dragon is broken. Of course, all children on the island know that the last Night Fury is missing a tailfin and cannot fly, but there are a select few still alive – Astrid Hofferson among them – that well and truly know

why he is broken, why he will not urge the new blacksmith to recreate the black tail his Rider made for him all those years ago, why he remains grounded, why he retired from the status of Alpha and will sleep nowhere but a stoneyard at night.

Six years ago, the Chief of Berk passed away. Quietly, in his sleep â€" a feat few of his predecessors managed. That was the night Toothless broke.

For the week following Hiccup's death, the Night Fury was everywhere in the village. He became the de-facto chief as the Chief's wife grieved. He ordered the dragon-flock of Berk to keep their riders in shape as he himself shattered into a thousand jagged pieces. He trilled and barked orders, ones interpreted through his long years at Hiccup's side. He kept silent vigil outside the Haddock household while the Hofferson woman cried. He brought trees for the funeral pyre and, when it came time to bid farewell to the deceased, Toothless sparked the flame (the last plasma he would ever shoot) that sent Hiccup's ashes and soul toward Valhalla.

So perhaps it is better to not say that Toothless is broken, more that he is burnt. He chose a human. And for those sixty glorious years, the two-that-are-one lit up the sky, through fire or joy or love it did not matter. Together, they crushed mountains, leveled forests, tamed seas; they mended old bonds and destroyed rotting ones, fearlessly leading their peoples on a path that could end only in unity, each an emissary to the other and beloved by both worlds.

And when that life-spark went out Toothless burnt out as well, because there was no more spark, no embers to light his flame.

(The dragons mourned for Toothless too, that day. They would not mourn when he left the mortal realm. They would not lament his inevitable passage into Valhalla.)

It is not hard to find Toothless now, if you know where to look. If you know where commemorations of the great chieftains are â€" there is a stone set in earth for each great leader, to keep their greatness rooted to Berk and lend it to their successors for generations to come. Hiccup's stone lays among his forefathers, along with Hamish the First and the esteemed Stoick the Vast. But if you happen to visit his stone at night, you might see a Night Fury curled up around Hiccup's tall stone, his tailfin as wounded as it was when they rode together, one wing extended to protect his Rider from the sun as he rests.

When Toothless passes six months later, there is no mourning in the island of Berk or the realm of the dragons. They know better. Instead, little Stoick the second, proud new Chief of Berk, instead commemorates the occasion. The tables of the Great Hall are dragged into the village and Vikings and dragons feast together, on chicken and fish, leaving the eel in the kitchen's wastebasket. Large bagpipes are retrieved and dusted off and Vikings play a song commemorating the forbidden friendship that marked the beginning of their worlds, all those long years ago. Dragons of all sizes and shapes flock to the table, chattering and trilling and making song of their own, a remembrance of their King, as benevolent and wise as the Alpha before him.

Outside of Berk, a great Bewilderbeast sits near the dock, her eyes closed in remembrance. A member of her flock, a peculiar four-winged dragon with dulling scales once colored fire-red settles itself in the stoneyard. Two of its four wings shade on the Chief's stone. And right beside Hiccup's stone rests Toothless's, so the dragon covers that stone as well with the other two wings, imitating the protection the loyal dragon had offered his human, as he had done for six lonely years.

The table in the center of the village, however, has two empty chairs at head and tail.

Well, the chairs are almost empty. Instead they are marked "one with the sign of the Chief, one with the sign of the Alpha, so that the two-who-are-one may eat together one last time in the mortal realm, amongst the people who do not mourn their passing and know instead that the two rejoice together.

And when the Vikings and dragons turn their heads skyward, feasting and singing as one people, united for the last time under their beloved leaders, they glimpse a Night Fury's silhouette. He does not need to be named. He flies high above the clouds for the first time in six years, restored black wings catching the sun's rays and soaring up to where his Rider patiently waits.

END

This fic is inspired by a lovely picture I saw online:
[.com\(slash\)art\(slash\)My-bud-472548049](http://www.deviantart.com/art/My-bud-472548049); it is feels-wrenching and fantastic and I recommend looking at it and crying over it.

End
file.